

**MINUTES OF THE  
NATIVE AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE LIAISON COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, November 16, 2010 – 4:00 p.m.

Room 25 House Building

**Members Present:**

Sen. Kevin T. Van Tassell, Senate Chair  
Rep. Jack R. Draxler, House Chair  
Sen. Patricia W. Jones  
Sen. Dennis E. Stowell  
Sen. Luz Robles  
Rep. Douglas C. Aagard  
Rep. Kay L. McIff  
Rep. Michael E. Noel

Rep. Jay F. Seegmiller  
Rep. Christine F. Watkins  
Rep. Mark A. Wheatley

**Staff Present:**

Mr. John Q. Cannon, Managing Policy Analyst  
Ms. Patricia Owen, Associate General Counsel  
Ms. Wendy Bangerter, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at [www.le.utah.gov](http://www.le.utah.gov).

**1. Committee Business**

Chair Sen. Van Tassell called the meeting to order at 4:09 p.m.

**MOTION:** Rep. Seegmiller moved to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2010 meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Stowell and Rep. McIff were absent for the vote.

**2. Uintah Basin Revitalization Fund Annual Report**

Mr. Keith Heaton, Program Manager, Department of Community and Culture, distributed and reviewed "Uintah Basin Revitalization Fund Legislative Report FY 2010." He responded to questions from the Committee.

**3. Navajo Revitalization Fund Annual Report**

Mr. Heaton distributed and reviewed "Navajo Revitalization Fund Annual Report." He stated the main purpose of the fund is to support capital improvements. He said the managing of the fund is still in transition since the former Navajo Trust Fund staff is no longer available to them to monitor the completion of projects.

He responded to questions from the Committee.

**4. Utah Division of Indian Affairs and Native American Remains Review Committee Annual Reports**

Mr. Forrest Cuch, Director, Utah Division of Indian Affairs, gave a report on the American Indian Summit held in Ogden on September 1-2, 2010. He reviewed excerpts from the Utah Department of Community and Culture Annual Report, FY 2010 on Indian Affairs previously distributed to the Committee. He updated the Committee on the repatriation of human remains saying that the first actual repatriation took place in February, 2010. He referred the Committee and public to [www.UtahIndians.com](http://www.UtahIndians.com). for more information. He distributed an invitation to committee members for Indigenous Day.

Mr. Cuch expressed concern that during these difficult economic times, the position of liaison between the tribes and the Utah Department of Health might be eliminated. He spoke highly of the work that Ms. Melissa Zito has done and asked for legislative support to retain that position.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the work that Mr. Cuch has given in his service to the Division of Indian Affairs.

#### **5. Followup of Issues From the Committee Meeting at the Native American Summit**

Mr. Cannon highlighted issues raised during the Native American Summit and efforts made to help tribal leaders understand the legislative process and work together with the Legislature to resolve their problems. He highlighted issues raised at the Summit and what the Legislature has done to raise the awareness of those issues with the appropriate agencies.

Ms. Owen discussed the legislative liaison position in the Department of Health. She stated that the Department and the Division have a proposal to rename the center for multi-cultural health and create an office specific to Native Alaskan and American Indian issues. To specify duties in statute would require code changes regarding both health and Indian affairs.

Ms. Debbie Turner, Government Affairs Director for the Utah Department of Health, distributed "Legislative Fact Sheet - Office of Health Disparity Reduction and the American Indian Health Liaison." She described the multi-cultural health center and how it has been functioning. She further explained the proposal to rename it in statute as the Center for Health Disparity Reduction. The existing positions would be formalized in statute and continue to act as liaisons between the Department of Health and the tribes. The change would not require extra funding. She emphasized how important this program is to Dr. Sundwall, Director of Department of Health.

Sen. Robles spoke in favor of the change. She emphasized the importance to have one or both of the chairs of the Committee in full support of the proposed change. She also asked that "disparity" be changed to "disparities" reflecting the multiple disparities that exist.

Ms. Melissa Zito, Utah Department of Health, responded to questions from the Committee and explained how all the tribes can be helped by partnering with several programs.

Chair Van Tassell directed staff to draft legislation. Asked Ms Zito to communicate to the tribes the efforts the Legislature is making.

#### **6. Other Items / Adjourn**

Chair Van Tassell announced that the Committee has received approval from the Legislative Management Committee to hold an off-site meeting. He proposed that a trip to the Navajo reservation in San Juan County be considered and encouraged.

**MOTION:** Sen. Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.  
Rep. Aagard was absent for the vote.

Chair Van Tassell adjourned the meeting at 5:13 p.m.